

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."—
 HOLY QUR-AN 33: 40. "There will be no Prophet after me."—MUHAMMAD.

The **Islamic Review**

FOUNDED BY THE LATE AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

[L. XXVIII]

RAJAB, 1359 A.H.
 SEPTEMBER, 1940 A.C.

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CONTENTS

A London Farewell Gathering	} <i>Frontispiece</i>	
A Partial View of the Holy Prophet's Birthday Celebration in London		
		PAGE
The Celebration of the Birthday of The Holy Prophet Muhammad in London		321
An Instance of the Gradual Change in the Apprecia- tion of The Holy Prophet		325
The Qur-an in Vindication of Jesus Christ and His Mother		328
The Martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain		334
Exoteric and Esoteric Significance of Prayer in Islam		346
Correspondence		355
What is Islam?		359

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Muslims in London assembled under the auspices of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, on Saturday 30th December 1939



A partial view of the gathering on the occasion of the Celebration of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in London on 20th April, 1940.
His Excellency Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of Egypt

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXVIII]

RAJAB, 1359 A.H.
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[No. 9

THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN LONDON

The Birthday of the Holy Prophet, which fell this year on Saturday, the 20th April, 1940, was celebrated in London by the Muslim Community of England with all the honours due to it, under the auspices of the Muslim Society in Great Britain. The Society, as is well known to those who have been observing the march of Islam in the West, has been keeping this auspicious occasion for the last 25 years. The function has become so popular that Muslim friends from all over England travel long distances in order to be able to do homage to the name and glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This year friends came from such distant places as the Channel Islands (Jersey), Manchester, Cambridge, Scotland and Bradford. Each one of these friends, when he returns to his respective home, carries with him a better conception of the life of the Holy Prophet and helps to hasten the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in the wondrous words of the Qur-án which

ISLAMIC REVIEW

read, "Consider the inkstand and the pen and that which they write. By the grace of your Lord you are not a madman." (Ch. 68, 1-2.) In other words, in proportion as true knowledge about the life of the Prophet increases, the fame and honour of the Prophet will multiply. No other truth is being fulfilled in the West more than the one contained in these words of the Qur-án. One has but to compare the books of to-day on Islam and the Prophet Muhammad with those that appeared (say) 50 years ago. The share of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, founded by the late Lord Headley and the late Khwaja Kamaluddin, in bringing about this revolution in the thought of Europe and this rectification of the perspective of the life of the Prophet Muhammad cannot be too strongly emphasised. The President of the Society, Mrs. Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton, who, because of her indifferent health, could not come, sent a telegram of best wishes on the blessed occasion of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and expressed a fervent wish for the day when the number of those taking part in the celebration will be fulfilled in the words of the Qur-án: "And you see men entering the religion of Allah in companies." (Chap. 110 : 2.) This year the Society organised this auspicious function at the Portman Rooms, Baker Street, London, W. 1. The Hall was decorated with the national flags of all the Muslim countries. In the photo, which appears as a frontispiece to this issue, can be seen the flag of Egypt hanging above the dais. Admirers and non-Muslim friends of the Holy Prophet Muhammad paid together their tribute to his memory and to his work in the most eloquent terms possible by coming in large numbers to this function held under the depressing and gloomy shadows of war. Those who took part in the proceedings numbered more than three hundred.

BIRTHDAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Mr. Ismail de Yorke, B.L., BAR-AT-LAW, Chairman of the Society, invited Mr. Dāūd Cowan, B.A. (London), an English Muslim friend, to recite the Qur-án. Mr. Cowan read the concluding verses of Chapters 9 and 48 both in Arabic and in English. Then, most appropriately, the Chairman declared the proceedings open. In requesting His Excellency Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of Egypt, Mr. de Yorke said that it was befitting that His Excellency Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha should take the chair on this auspicious occasion, for not only did he represent His Majesty King Farouk who, because of his love for the traditions of Islam, had earned for himself the sobriquet of "the righteous king," but Dr. Hassan was also one of the rare diplomats who combined in their single person zeal for their religion with the art of diplomacy. Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha is sponsoring a scheme for starting a Centre of Islamic Culture in London whose symbol will be a magnificent mosque worthy of the name of the religion of Islam. He assured his Excellency of the co-operation of the Society in the realisation of the scheme. In the midst of loud cheers, Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha took the chair and at once proceeded to make his presidential remarks, in the course of which he pointed out the importance of the occasion. The Chairman then called upon Mr. de Yorke to deliver his speech on the life of the Prophet. Mr. de Yorke dealt with the life of the Prophet from various points of view, especially from that of the help it could render us in the humdrum of our lives to solve the problems of the world. Those problems, he opined, had crystallised themselves into the two deities—the deity of class and the deity of the state. All religions, in their modern forms, excepting Islam and Christianity, favoured one or the other. Mr. de Yorke was followed

ISLAMIC REVIEW

by an Egyptian Lady, Miss Iglal Hafiz, a student at the Slade School of Art at Cambridge, who said a few words about the exalted position of woman in Islam. Her remarks must have gone a long way to remove some of the still prevalent misconceptions regarding the true position of woman in Islam. She emphasised the necessity of making a clear distinction between the teachings of Islam and the backslidings of the Muslims of the present day. She was followed by an eminent Hindu scholar, Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri, PH.D., who, in paying his tribute to the greatness of the Prophet Muhammad, emphasised the essential unity of Islam and Hinduism. The learned scholar was doing nothing but reaffirming the truth contained in the pages of the Holy Qur-án which was preached for the first time in the history of the spiritual education of mankind. The Qur-án says: "Every nation has had a warner." (35 : 24 ; 10 : 47, 4 : 164.) Dr. Shastri was followed by Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bokhary, B.A., of the All-India Radio, who delivered a speech in the Urdu language and read some verses from the classic "Musaddas" of Hali, the famous Indian Muslim poet. Last—but not least—to come to the platform was Mr. Haroun-al-Rashid, B.A., BAR-AT-LAW, who proposed a vote of thanks to the chair, which was carried unanimously. Mr. Haroun-al-Rashid also announced that, by courtesy of the Woking Muslim Mission, there was available a large number of pamphlets on the life and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and those who were interested in the subject should kindly avail themselves of this free gift. Mr. Rashid also invited the audience to partake of the light refreshments which were then served.

Among those present were :

His Excellency the Iranian Minister, Sir Firoz
Khan Noon, Al-hajj Lieut.-Colonel Sir Hassan

APPRECIATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Suhrawardy, The Chargé d'Affaires of Saudi Arabia, The Chargé d'Affaires of Iraq, Colonel S. F. Newcombe, Colonel Ferrar, Mr. Gammons of the Ministry of Information, Mrs. G. H. Bell, Mrs. A. Blacker-Douglass, Mr. John Zakian, Mr. Mallowan, Secretary, Anglo-Turkish Relief Committee, Mr. C. E. Newham, Dr. Leigh Vaughan-Henry, Dr. Rawlinson, Professor Varma, Dr. and Mrs. Shakir Muhammadi, Hajee Ali Reza and Mr. and Mrs. Nasim Hussain.

AN INSTANCE OF THE GRADUAL CHANGE IN THE APPRECIATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET

In connection with the preceding account of the proceedings of the celebration of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, we believe the following interesting, though lengthy, excerpt from the pen of an American writer, Mr. Francis Grant, the author of "Oriental Philosophy," New York, 1938, pp. 297—299, will be read with interest. It shows the gradual change that is taking place in the West about the conception of the personality of the Prophet Muhammad as a result of the meagre efforts of societies like the Muslim Society in Great Britain and the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust. No one is encouraged by this change more than are the workers of the Woking Muslim Mission who can vividly recall to themselves the West of 1912, the year of the inauguration of the Woking Muslim Mission in England, and compare it with the West of to-day. Mr. Grant writes :

"Perhaps no founder of a religion has been heaped with greater revilements outside his followers than has Muhammad. Faiths, which forgot their own bloodshed in the name of God, denounced

ISLAMIC REVIEW

him for raising the sword. Civilisations which have sanctioned plural marriages by the expedient of divorce expressed horror that he permitted polygamy, although it actually provided the one protection then possible for the women of Arabia. Theologians have questioned the sincerity of his revelations. But those who have studied the Qur-án must perceive in these articulations an anxiety of heart, an authenticity of conscience which denies imposture. His own experiences during those revelations, as described by Muir, were twofold. Sometimes Gabriel appeared to him and addressed him as one man to another. Sometimes, however, he heard the ringing of a bell and a piercing of his heart which seemed to rend him into pieces. This description rings as true as do the confessions of the fiery, heart-rending experiences of mystics of all times.

“Certainly the greatest testimony for the Prophet of Islam are the thirteen centuries which have followed by, and the two hundred millions* of men who have found in his word their one guidance towards the Lord. Max Müller has wisely said, ‘There was never a false religion unless one wishes to call a child a false man.’ And need one answer the critics of Muhammad—is he not best answered daily by the prayers of 200,000,000 men? For facing Makka they prostrate themselves in remembrance of Allah and in gratitude to Muhammad, His Prophet, and pronounce, ‘There is no other God besides Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.’ It is a daring man indeed who would venture to set his word against 200,000,000!

*This is the Christian estimate—Ed., I. R.

APPRECIATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET

“Perhaps no more magnificent expression of the full significance of the voice of Islam will be written than Carlyle’s heroic words: “To the Arab it (the voice of the Prophet) was a birth from darkness into light. Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world; a hero-prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe. See—the unnoticed becomes world-notable; the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Granada on this hand and at Delhi on that. Glancing in valour and splendour and light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is life-giving. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great as soon as it believes. These Arabs—the man Muhammad, and that one century—is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark in a world of what seemed black, unnoticeable sand? But lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high, from Delhi to Granada. I said the great man was always as lightning out of heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, then they would flame.”

THE QUR-ÁN IN VINDICATION OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

BY MAULVI AHSANULLAH

The Holy Qur-án says: "Wa-qul jā'al haqqu wa zahaqal bātilu in-nal bātila kāna zahūqā. Wanonaz-zilu minal Qur-áni má huwa shifā'uw wa rahmatul-lil mu'minīn, walā yaziduz-zālimīna illā khasārā."

And say truth has now
Arrived and falsehood perished
For falsehood is by its nature bound to perish.
And We send down stage by stage in the Qur-án
That which is a healing and a mercy to those
Who believe and to the unjust it causes
Nothing but loss after loss. (*Vide* Sura Baní-
Isrá'íl, Verses 81-82.)

Thus in course of time truth must prevail and happy is the man who realises it and mends his way accordingly to conform to truth.

The Holy Qur-án further says: "Wa izá qíla lahumut-tabi'ū mā-anzalalláhu, qálū bal-nattabi'u mā wajadnā 'alaihi ábāanā awa-law kāna-sh-shaitānu yad'ūhum ilā 'azābis sa'ir."

When they are told to follow the (revelation) that God has sent down; they say: "Nay we shall follow the way that we found our fathers following." What! Even if it is Satan beckoning them to the penalty of (blazing fire). (*Vide* Sura Luqmān, Verse 21.)

We often blindly follow the beaten track. Thus we find that our propensity for imitation is responsible either for our right course or wrong path and the actions of those whom we imitate are of vital importance, hence the necessity to follow a true guide.

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

Nearly 1,400 years have passed and during this long period the truth of the message in the Qur-án has remained unchanged. It is, therefore, expected that the following quotations from the Qur-án will vindicate the character of Jesus Christ (Peace of Allah be on him !) and the blasphemous ideas about him and his mother (peace of Allah be on them both) will be revised.

SURA MARYAM

Verse 16.—"Wazkur fil kitábi

Maryama, izintabazat min

Ahlihá makānan sharqiyya."

Relate in the book (the story of)

Mary when she withdrew from

her family to a place in the East.

Verse 17.—"Fattakhazat min dúnihim

hijāban fa arsalná ilaihá rūhaná

fatamassala lahá basharan sawiyyá."

She placed a screen (to screen

herself) from them. Then We sent

to her Our angel and he appeared before her as

a man in all respects.

Verse 18.—"Qálat Inni-a'úzu

bir-rahmáni minka in kunta taqiyyá."

Said she : "I seek refuge from thee to God,

Most gracious (come not near)

if thou dost fear God."

Verse 19.—"Qāla in-namā anā

Rasūlu Rabbiki li ahaba laka ghulāman zakiyyá."

He said : "Nay, I am

only a messenger from thy Lord to announce

to thee the gift of a holy son."

Verse 20.—"Qālat an-ná

yakúnu lí ghulāmun wa lam yamsasní

basharun, walam aku baghiyyá."

She said : "How shall I

have a son seeing that no man has

touched me and I am not unchaste?"

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Verse 21.—"Qāla Kazāliki

Qāla rabbuki Huwa 'alayya hayyinun
wa li-naj'alahú áyatal-lin-nāsi wa rahmatam
minnā wa kāna amram maqdiyyá."

He said : " So it will be.

Thy Lord saith : 'That is easy for me
(and) (We wish) to appoint him as a
sign unto men and a mercy from us.'
It is a matter (so) decreed."

Verse 22.—"Fa-hamalat-hu

fantabazat bihi maqāman qasiyyá."

So she conceived him

and she retired with him

To a remote place.

Verse 23.—"Fa-ajā-ahal makhādu

ilā jiz'in-nakhlati, Qālat yālaitanī

mittu qabla hāza wa kuntu nasyam-mansiyyá."

And the pains of childbirth

Drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree :

She cried (in her anguish)

" Ah, would that I had

Died before this, would that

I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight."

Verse 24.—"Fanādāhā min tahtiha Al-lá tahzanī

qad ja'ala rabbuki tahtaki sariyyá."

But (a voice) cried to her

From beneath the palm tree 'Grieve not, for
thy Lord

Hath provided a rivulet

Beneath thee.

Verse 25.—"Wa-huzzi ilaiki

Bi jiz'in-nakhlati

Tusáqit 'alaiki rutaban janiyyá."

' And shake towards thyself

The trunk of the palm tree :

It will let fall

Fresh ripe dates upon thee.'

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

Verse 26.—"Fakulí washrabí

Wa qarri áinan
Fa-immá tarainna
minal bashari ahadan
faqūlī inni nazartu
lir rahmāni sauman
Falan ukallimal yauma
insiyyá."

' So eat and drink
And cool (thine) eye.
And if thou dost see
Any man, say, I have
Vowed a fast to (God)
Most gracious, and thus
Will I enter into no talk
With any human being.'

Verse 27.—"Fa atat bihí qawmahá

Tahmiluhu
Qālú yá Maryama
laqad ji'ti shai'an fariyyá."

At length she brought the
(baby) to her people,
Carrying him (in her arms).
They said, "O Mary,
Truly an amazing thing
Hast thou brought.

Verse 28.—"Yá ukhta Hárúna mākána

Abūki imra'a-
Saw'in wa mā-kanat
ummuki baghiyyá."

"O sister of Aaron,
Thy father was not a bad man, nor thy
mother a woman unchaste."

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Verse 29.—"Fa ashārat ilaihi.
Qálú kaifa nukallimu
Man kāna fil mahdi
sabiyyá."

But she pointed to the baby.
They said, 'How can we
Talk to one who is a child in the cradle?'

Verse 30.—"Qāla inní ‘abdullāhi
Atāniyal kitāba wa
Ja‘alani nabiyyá."

He said, "I am indeed
A servant of God :
He hath given me
book and made
Me a prophet.

Verse 31.—"Wa-ja‘alaní mubárákan
aina má kuntu, wa-
ausáni bis-salāti waz-zakāti
Mā-dumtu hayyá."

"And He hath made me blessed
Wheresoever I be,
And hath enjoined on
Me prayer and charity as long
As I live."

Verse 32.—"Wa barram bi wálidati
Wa lam yaj‘alni jabbāran
Shaqiyyá."

"He hath made me kind,
To my mother and not over-bearing
and unhappy."

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

Verse 33.—" Was-salāmu 'alayya yauma
wulidtu wa yauma amūtu
Wa yauma ub'asu hayyá."

" So peace is on me
The day I was born,
The day that I die,
And the day that I shall be raised up
To life again."

Verse 34.—" Zālika 'Īsabnu Maryama
Qawlul haqqil lazī fihi
Yamtarūn."

Such (was) Jesus, the son
Of Mary ; (it is) a
Statement of truth, about
which they (vainly) dispute.

Verse 35.—" Mā kāna lillāhi ay-yattikhiza
miw waladin ;
Sub-hānahú ; iza qadā
Amran
Fa innamā-yaqúlu lahū kun fayakūn."

It is not befitting to (the majesty) of God that He
beget a son.
Glory be to Him
When He determines
A matter,
He only says to it, ' Be,' and it is.

Verse 36.—" Wa Innallāha rabbí wa
Rabbukum, Fa'budūhu
Hāza sirátum
Mustaqim."

" Verily God is my Lord and
Your Lord : Him therefore
Serve ye, this is a way
That is straight."

THE MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT IMAM HUSAIN*

BY SYED GHAZANFAR ALI SHAH BOKHARY, B.A.

I consider it a privilege, indeed an honour, to have been asked to speak on a subject of such great historical importance.

The tenth day of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar, which is regarded as a month of reverence, is the saddest day, though perhaps, in a way, the grandest day in the history of Islam. This is the day on which, in 61 A.H., almost thirteen hundred years ago, Hazrat Imam Husain, the hero-saint of Islam, made the supreme sacrifice of his life, and thereby made history of a unique and incomparable kind in the annals of martyrdom. By his brave and heroic stand in the cause of Islam and of truth (which, to my mind, are one and the same thing), he not only captured the imagination of Muslims in particular, but of non-Muslims as well. The fact that the passage of such a long time, instead of dimming the lustre and glory of this historic event, is, on the contrary, rather adding to the brightness of its remembrance, is in itself a proof of its immortal nature, as far as its claim upon the respect and admiration of the Muslims is concerned.

Indeed, it would be no exaggeration if I were to say that Hazrat Imam Husain's martyrdom, which is unparalleled in its character, has remained, and will always remain, a source of inspiration to all true Muslims in circumstances of difficulty when confronted by incalculable odds. In order to appreciate more fully the nature of this great man's heroism, I consider

* Being the text of a lecture delivered before the Muslim Society in Great Britain on the occasion of the anniversary of Sayyidina Imam-Husain on the 19th February, 1940. Al-Hajj Lt.-Col. Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, Advisor to the Secretary of State for India, was in the chair.

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN

that it would not be out of place if I were to narrate rather briefly some of the relevant historical facts about his life. Hazrat Imam Husain is the second grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him !) through his beloved daughter, the Lady Fatima al-Zahra, Fatima the Brilliant. He is the son of Hazrat Ali, "the Gate of Wisdom," "the Lion of Allah," the staunch supporter and valiant champion of Islam, the last of the first four Caliphs, whose services to the cause of Islam are far too numerous to be recounted here.

Hazrat Imam Husain was born in the year 4 A.H. in Madina. During his childhood he was greatly loved by the Holy Prophet Muhammad for his sweet and gentle manners and, along with his elder brother, Hazrat Imam Hasan, was, in fact, fondly styled one of the leaders of the youth of paradise. It may well be that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, with the prophetic vision that he was endowed with, could foresee the trials and tribulations his grandsons would have to face and pass through in the cause of Islam, hence the title. From his early childhood, he was fortunate in being brought up in an environment which made a lasting impression on his character, and he grew up into a fine gentleman of brilliant parts, imbued with the true ideals and true principles of Islam. That he was upright, honest, sincere and noted for bravery, magnanimity, piety and ability, even his worst enemies must concede. His life was indeed considered a model of virtue, about which authentic records are available, so full and copious that it is almost impossible not to know everything about him in the minutest detail. In the history of martyrdom, this is also one of the strongest arguments for his being classed as the greatest, as there are no mists of legend, no hazy recollections, no imaginative records about his life and character,

ISLAMIC REVIEW

as is invariably found in the case of the other great martyrs of the world.

In order to understand how much his daily conduct was governed by the teachings of the holy Qur-án, I am going to relate to you an incident in his life which is regarded by historians as a typical illustration.

Once in Madina Hazrat Imam Husain invited a number of friends to a formal dinner. While it was being served, his servant, by accident, scalded him by spilling on him a plateful of steaming hot broth. The servant, thinking that his master would be very angry with him, at once quoted a verse from the Holy Qur-án (3 : 133), which, translated, runs: "Paradise is for those who restrain their anger . . ." To which Hazrat Imam Husain replied, "I am not angry." The servant, encouraged by this response, added, "And for those who pardon offences." To which Hazrat Imam Husain further replied, "I pardon your negligence." The servant followed this up by reciting another part of the same verse. Hazrat Imam Husain thereupon replied, "I grant you your liberty and, further, reward you with four hundred pieces of silver." This illustrates how earnest was Hazrat Imam Husain in leading his life in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur-án, and how much his daily life was governed by its dictates.

With this short introduction, I shall now relate to you the circumstances which led to the tragedy, the anniversary of which we have gathered together to commemorate this evening. When the Prophet Muhammad, after the successful completion of his mission, departed for the other world, it was found necessary to appoint a successor as his representative to carry on the temporal and religious duties which the Holy Prophet used to perform in his lifetime. Islam, as we all know, is a religion essentially based on democratic principles,

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN

and accords its followers a measure of equality which is the envy of all the other religions of the world. It, therefore, naturally, demanded that the question of succession to the Holy Prophet Muhammad should also be dealt with in the same democratic fashion. The fact that Abu Bakr was elected to fill this august office, and not Ali who, if the principle of heredity had been followed, would have been the rightful successor, further conclusively proves this statement. On the same principle, Umar the Great, Uthman and, ultimately, Ali, were elected as Caliphs successively. The lives of these Caliphs are glorious examples of how these great men, who were the esteemed companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, when called upon to fill this office, nobly acquitted themselves on the lines and principles laid down by Islam.

It is rather unfortunate that these illustrious Caliphs filled between themselves only three decades of terms of office and, except for the first, who died a natural death, all the other three died at the hands of assassins. It was on the death of Ali that Imam Hasan, the elder brother of Hazrat Imam Husain, was popularly elected as the fifth Caliph, when Mu'áwiya, who until then was the governor of Sham—the modern Syria—took upon himself to challenge the title. Even during the lifetime of Ali, Mu'áwiya had shown his intransigent attitude towards democratic methods by refusing allegiance to Ali on the pretext that Ali had not punished the murderer of Uthman, the third Caliph. Imam Hasan, realising that, if he were to enforce his election, he would have to fight Mu'áwiya, and that this would mean unnecessary bloodshed of the Muslims, decided to abdicate in favour of Mu'áwiya. The latter thereupon gave him a pledge in the form of a treaty that he would carry on the functions of Caliph in accordance with the principles of Islam, and that he

would not appoint his own successor, but would leave the question of succession to popular election as hitherto.

It is said that Hazrat Imam Husain disagreed with the decision of his brother, but when the treaty was signed, as he was not politically ambitious, he fell in line with his elder brother ; and it is a convincing proof of his honesty of intention and sincerity of purpose, that, during the long term of twenty years of office of Mu'áwiya, Hazrat Imam Husain did not take any step to prejudice Mu'áwiya's position, even though there had been numbers of occasions when he could justifiably have done so. The poisoning episode of his brother, Imam Hasan, a serious rival in the eyes of Mu'áwiya, in the year 50 A.H., could justifiably have been regarded as such an occasion. When Hazrat Imam Husain, desiring vengeance, enquired of his brother as to whom he thought responsible for this treacherous act, the noble Imam, in order to avoid any serious eventualities in the form of civil uprising, refused to name the person and is said to have replied, "This world is only a long night. Leave him alone until he and I shall meet in open daylight, in the presence of the Most High, where he will have to give a full account of himself." As the reply shows, it was a direct request to the brother to submit to the will of Allah in all circumstances, which was accepted. Such were the traditions which Hazrat Imam Husain had to uphold, when he now had to assume the mantle of leadership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's family. After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan, Mu'áwiya, seeing his way clear and his position secure, assumed a monarchical rôle, proclaimed the Khilafat as hereditary by nominating his own son as his successor and further declared the state revenue and income to be Crown property, though the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his illustrious Caliphs had scrupulously regarded this as public

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN

property. This was a clear breach of the covenant Mu'áwiya had entered into with Imam Hasan, but as long as Mu'áwiya lived, and in spite of certain unauthorised practices which had crept into the general behaviour of the "Royal Court," as it now styled itself, Hazrat Imam Husain did not feel justified in taking any drastic action, as he felt that, apart from some objectionable things, Islamic principles, though not at a premium, were still not much below par.

On the death of Mu'áwiya, however, his son Yazid ascended the throne and demanded allegiance from Hazrat Imam Husain who, even in the lifetime of Yazid's father, had flatly refused to accept his nomination as either legal or right. It is most unfortunate that Yazid's character was also against him. He was perhaps the worst possible example of evil and all it stands for. He not only led a sinful, sensual and immoral life, but he used to take pride in his vices. He was a drunkard and debauchee and, in fact, it is said that he used to go out of his way to violate the principles of Islam. Had he been a true Muslim, it can be said with certainty that Hazrat Imam Husain would have been persuaded to leave him alone. Now that even the pretence of Islam was discarded, it was perhaps the height of arrogance on the part of Yazid to expect an unqualified allegiance from Hazrat Imam Husain ; but Yazid knew very well that his position was unsafe as long as Hazrat Imam Husain was alive and in open opposition to his rule. He therefore took immediate steps, through his Governor of Madina, to exact allegiance from Hazrat Imam Husain intending to strike a mortal blow should he refuse to submit. The Omayyads, during the reign of Mu'áwiya, had acquired immense political power in Syria, and were, moreover, supported by a mercenary army. Yazid made full use of this army when the actual tragedy

ISLAMIC REVIEW

took place and Hazrat Imam Husain realising that an unbearable pressure might be brought against him in this connection, left Madina for Makka, where he was absolutely safe and free from the cruel hands of Yazid. The latter being fully aware of the fact that as long as Hazrat Imam Husain remained in Makka, he would not be able to do anything, kept low, marking time for the opportunity which at length offered itself to him in the form of an invitation from the people of the town of Kufa who invited Hazrat Imam Husain to assume their leadership and to rid them of the tyrant who was oppressing the people of modern Iraq all the more ruthlessly because of the respect and attachment this province showed to the House of Ali. Feeling that if he were to refuse to respond to these calls, he would be shirking his duty of fighting for the truth (a thing which anyone, having the slightest knowledge of his sterling character, could hardly imagine him doing) Hazrat Imam Husain accepted their invitation and started to march towards Iraq with a handful of devoted followers and the members of his family, which consisted of his sister, his cousins, nephews, sons and daughters. He had taken the precautionary measure of sending his personal representative to Kufa, in the first place to find out the true feeling of the people and to report to him. The report he had received prior to his departure was favourable. This representative of Hazrat Imam Husain had also attained martyrdom as, after he had reported, and the governor had made sure that his favourable report had gone through and could not be altered by his action, he immediately arrested him and had him beheaded. This governor also sent an army of one thousand soldiers, headed by Hur, to intercept Hazrat Imam Husain and demand his allegiance. The army came in contact with Hazrat Imam Husain's

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN

entourage on the borders of Iraq, where Hur explained the position to Hazrat Imam Husain and also stated the orders he had received. When he was convinced that the people of Kufa had swung round to the colours of Yazid, Hazrat Imam Husain asked to be permitted to return to Makka, which message was duly sent on by Hur to the governor in the hope that this would be agreed to. The governor, however, who had the strict orders of Yazid, sent a further 4,000 cavalry as reinforcement under the command of Amar bin Sa'd, to exact allegiance from Hazrat Imam Husain or else to destroy him. When Amar bin Sa'd arrived on the scene, Hazrat Imam Husain was camping alongside the river-bank of the Euphrates in the plains of Karbala. To him too, Hazrat Imam Husain gave the same answer as before, though this time he offered three alternatives to the governor : one being that he should be taken to Damascus, where he might negotiate with Yazid direct ; the second that he might be allowed to return to Makka and the third that he might be sent to any frontier town where he could fight for the cause of Islam. These three alternatives were also conveyed to the governor for further instructions, but this time the governor sent a reply by the hand of Shimar, with instructions to assume the supreme command of the troops if Amar bin Sa'd further delayed matters, to cut off Hazrat Imam Husain's camp from access to the river for water, to demand an unqualified allegiance, and, if this were refused, to destroy him. As Yazid really was anxious about Hazrat Imam Husain's person and the governor offered a safe conduct to the rest of the members of the family, Hazrat Imam Husain, when this final reply reached him, realised that now there was nothing left for him but to fight. The members of his family, when offered their passports, threw them back and declared that they would fight to their last man

ISLAMIC REVIEW

before Hazrat Imam Husain could be touched or harmed. Hazrat Imam Husain tried to warn his small band of followers of the danger they were in, and exhorted them all to return to Makka, and to leave him alone, as he knew that the position was wellnigh hopeless. He further assured them that it was only himself, and not them, that Yazid sought, but his brave men refused to part from him preferring to die before him rather than to desert him. In the last three days before the tragedy, the Prophet's family, including the women and children, suffered the most cruel tortures of hunger and thirst, which they could not allay as access to the river was barred by the interposition of the cavalry between the river-bank and Hazrat Imam Husain's camp.

On the tenth day of Muharram, the actual tragedy took place, and Hazrat Imam Husain saw with his own eyes, his followers, killed one after another. Then his kinsmen followed, and they, too, one after another, having given a brave account of themselves, fell slain. While this massacre was in progress even the poor little children were mortally wounded and killed by piercing arrows which were flung at them. When Hazrat Imam Husain, the last male member of the family but one, went into action, such was the prestige and brave bearing of this great martyr that, in spite of the fact that there were thousands on the other side, they felt timid in approaching him. However, Shimar the cruel (who is universally condemned for the ignoble part he played) with a number of troops, attacked him, and this gallant, noble warrior, after receiving thirty-three wounds and showing courage and bravery of an unparalleled character, fell and was killed, his head being cut off and his body cruelly trampled upon by the cavalry. The fact that this noble family did not become extinct is due to the fact that his son Zain-al-

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN

'Abidīn, was lying ill in bed, and although he is said to have made an effort to get up and go out to fight, he was successfully dissuaded.

The head was sent to Yazid who, when he saw it, was so conscience-stricken that he wept and is said to have cursed his governor. He returned the head and also permitted the members of the family to return to Makka. In order to appreciate why this great man considered it necessary to sacrifice himself and his near and dear ones, his last address to the troops of the opposition is self-explanatory. Translated, it runs as follows :

“O people, the Apostle of God has said that he who sees a ruler who is perpetrating an injustice, who is exceeding the limits fixed by God, who breaks the covenant of God, who opposes the teachings of the Prophet, who rules God's people sinfully and tyrannically—he who sees such a ruler and does not oppose him by word or deed, God will not vouchsafe him a happy abode. Corruption reigns supreme, God's limits are violated, public property is misappropriated, that which God has made lawful is being made unlawful, that which God has made unlawful is being made lawful. I have the greatest right to change this tyranny for truth and justice.”

It is obvious from this how strongly he felt about the state of affairs then prevailing and why it was impossible for him to compromise the issue that was at stake.

What the historians regard as having been uppermost in his mind at the time, was that he should set an example to other Muslims who, though pious and virtuous, had taken an indifferent attitude towards the temporal affairs of the state because of the disgust

that they felt at the un-Islamic actions of the ruler. This could only be done by opposing the ruler with words and deeds, as the Holy Prophet had actually enjoined every true Muslim to do, even though it might cost him his life, and everything that he held near and dear to him.

As for death, he had no qualms or fears, as no true Muslim can have any. This is one of Islam's greatest contributions to humanity, that it has exorcised the fear of death from the mind of Muslims, and has replaced it with the fear of God, an emotion which not only ennobles the spirit, but further endows its followers with a courage and bravery which it is hard to equal. What is more, has not God Almighty promised in His Holy Qur-án that all those who die in the cause of Allah shall attain immortality, and never die? The verse in fact runs as follows, *Wa lā taqūlū liman yuqtalu fī sabīli 'l-Lāhi amwātun bal ahyāun*, *Wa lā kin lā tash-urūn*—"And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead, nay, they are alive, but you do not perceive." (The Holy Qur-án, Chapter 2 : 154.)

Hazrat Imam Husain was well aware of this, and immortal he did become. While now he is reverently remembered, and a section of Muslims make a yearly pilgrimage to the plains of Karbala to pay their homage, Yazid's name even is regarded by Muslims as an accursed one and all he receives is a stone cast on his grave, which is now nothing more than a great, ugly heap of stones.

Hazrat Imam Husain's martyrdom has been the cause of the resuscitation of Islam as, when this tragedy was enacted, a wave of horror and indignation went through the whole Muslim world and this was the root cause of the downfall of the Omayyads who, in a relatively short time, disappeared from the political horizon.

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN

The fact that he could all the time even up to the last minute have saved himself and his near and dear ones, by giving "allegiance," and that, further, he would have been liberally rewarded (this temptation was repeatedly placed before him throughout the parleys, only to be refused), makes his martyrdom all the more great. For, in the case of the other martyrs of the world, no such option existed and, besides, in their case only their personal life was in danger and the unbearable anguish of seeing their kith and kin actually being cruelly tortured and butchered was never inflicted upon them.

All honour is due to this great man who, in spite of the terrible pressure that was brought to bear upon him, stood firm and saved the honour of Islam; and it is only right that we should commemorate his anniversary in a befitting manner, by which I mean that we should follow his noble example in actual deeds and not just pay lip courtesy to his greatness.

I feel that the greatest tribute that we could possibly pay to this great martyr of Islam is to emulate him in everything and imbue our characters with his noble qualities, so much so that we should lead our daily lives as true Muslims and, above all, should hold ourselves ready for any sacrifice, however great, if this becomes necessary in the cause of Islam.

In conclusion, I would request my Muslim brethren to recite *Darud Sharif* and bless Hazrat Imam Husain's soul with it. May the Almighty's choicest blessings be upon him!

EXOTERIC AND ESOTERIC SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

BY KHAN BAHADUR HAJI B. M. K. LODI.

[Continued from Vol. XXVIII, page 316.]

This aspect of the Prayer is very thoughtful and far-seeing because there are two conspicuous ways for man to choose (Qur-án, XC:10): (1) The way of *Virtue* and (2) The way of *Vice*. The natural yearning of his soul is, however, to adopt the right course, but he finds it an uphill task (Qur-án, XC: 11). The chief obstacle in his way of choosing, which renders his choice difficult, is this. The straight path is many a time interfered with by human idiosyncrasy and made to appear thorny and crooked while a wrong path is given an illusory garb of being straight and praiseworthy. Unenlightened and unguided, he is likely to be allured into the wrong way and to tumble down into the abyss of indiscrimination. It is here that a divine guidance is essentially called for. He aspires, therefore, for that path which was followed by those people to whom God was "gracious" (Verse 6), and not the path of those who incurred the "displeasure" of God (Verse 7, first part)—the negative of His grace, or of those who went astray (Verse 7, second part). The former are, to explain further, they who deliberately break the Divine laws, such as the *Jews* who rejected Jesus as a liar, and the latter are those who strayed away out of ignorance or misguidance, like the *Christians* who discarded the advent of the foretold Prophet Muhammad, and who manipulated the original monotheistic teachings of Jesus and who raised him to the level of God.

What an *ideal* prayer! A prayer which, in the words of Allama Yusuf Ali, the latest Muslim translator

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

and commentator of the Qur-án, “ sums up our faith, our hope and/or aspirations in things that matter ” in a nutshell. Can any dispassionate student of religion dare question the *ideal* nature of the Prayer ? Each of its seven verses is a precious gem and the Prayer as a whole is a Rosary of seven gems, the like of which can hardly elsewhere be seen.

This is the *exoterical* aspect of the Prayer. Let us also have an idea of its *esoterical* interpretation by Sufis and Mystics.* They quote a Tradition of the Prophet, and say that the *Sura al-Fátiha* is divided into two halves—one half, *viz.*, the first three verses, for God, and other—the last four verses, for man. While a person begins his prayer with the formula of *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim* (the headline of the Qur-án, meaning: In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful), God says—My servant has remembered Me ; when he says : All praise be to the Lord of the Worlds, God says : My servant has praised Me ; when he thinks of Him as the Master of the day of judgment, God says : My servant has left all his affairs with Me, and so on. These responsive words, which are ascribed to the Worshipped, emanate from the mind and mouth of the worshipper.

A deep mystic theory is involved here. According to Ibn-ul-Arabi and others of his way of thinking, the power of speech by the aid of which man begins to open his mouth and move his tongue, owes its origin to the “ Spirit of God ” which He breathed unto him (Qur-án, XV : 29). Hence the speech is not his, but God’s, that is, it is He who speaks, and not man. “ That voice is absolutely of the King (God) Himself, although it may proceed from the throat of Abdullah (a servant of God) ” is what Maulana Rumi, the

**Fusus-ul-Hikam* by Ibn-ul-Arabi ; and *Wisdom of Prophets* by Khan Sahib Khwaja Khan Sahib.

immortal author of *Mathnawi* (Book I) has said. God has spoken through the Prophet: "I am your tongue, I am your eye, I am your senses, I am your will, I am your anger," which is again amplified as "when I become your friend, I become your ear and hear; I become your eye and see; I become your head and hold; I become your feet and move" (Sahih Bukhari, *Kitab-ul-Ádáb*). The idea is that a man who approaches God in a humble prayerful attitude, becomes His friend. Similar are the expositions in the Hindu Philosophy; for instance: (1) The music and the musician are inseparable,† and (2) "He is the ear, and He is the listener."‡

The above statements may appear extraordinary (if not revolting) to those minds that are not accustomed to a philosophical way of thinking, but even a lay mind can appreciate the radical truth which seems to underlie them. Man is *divine* in his essence, and his essence is identical with the Universal Essence. He is also the *Vicegerent* of God. God, therefore, speaks through him, as a King expresses his mind through his Viceroy. Therefore, man's actions generally have their origin in the "Universal unity," in the "Unity of Existence," through "limited existence." There is an Arabic saying: "There is no action which is not from God." Let us, however, refrain from discussing the theory further, lest it may lead us too far from the subject-matter on hand and take us into deep waters so that we might get out of our depth.

Let us, therefore, revert to the main point. Having dealt with the general structure and the general meaning of the Prayer, it behoves us now to enter a little below the surface and ascertain its verbal implications, but we can deal with only a few words, and make a mere

†Tagore, *Sadhana*, page 145.

‡Page 190, *Kabir's Poems*, by Tagore.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

passing reference to each of these words in an article like this. Besides, the subject is so profound and our knowledge thereof is so limited that we do not venture on writing a formal exegesis. There are, however, certain words in the Prayer which are marvellously beautiful, appropriate and significant and which tend to substantiate the copiousness of the Arabic vocabulary and the peculiarity of the language in possessing "words of suggestive and meaningful nature," and we will deal with them only as we have comprehended them.

For instance, the *Al* in the first word, *Al-hamd* (praise) is in Arabic the definite article denoting "the"; it is often used to express "greatness," "grandeur" something "sacred." Here it signifies, as most of the commentators agree, *all kinds* of praise which could be conceived of God in His Eternal past, in His eternal present and eternal future. The word *hamd*, which ordinarily means "praise," has come to signify "the praise of God," and of God alone.

Another word in the first verse, and of far more importance and deep implication is *Rabb*. It has been generally rendered into English: *Lord* (evidently for want of a better word)—the Creator, Protector and Sustainer of all Creation. It conveys an idea of "fostering," "bringing up," "nourishing," "cherishing," "sustaining," and so on, and points to the Providence Who takes care of all His creation, Who regulates their affairs and Who evolves their conditions to their perfection and to their legitimate end. The meaning that is contained in the root of the word "conveys a far nobler and grander idea than the word "father" (in the Lord's Prayer) which has comparatively a very limited significance" (Maulana Muhammad Ali).

ISLAMIC REVIEW

The terminal word of the first verse, viz., '*Alamín*' means that God is "the Lord of *all the worlds*." '*Alamín*' is the plural of '*álam*', the root-word of which is '*ilm*', meaning "to know," that is, the world which makes known the Creator and, as Allama Yusuf Ali has said, all the worlds that are known—astronomical, physical and spiritual—and worlds of thought and so on. The very first Quranic conception of God is so broad, so all-embracing as to testify to the Unity and Fatherhood of God on the one hand and the unity and brotherhood of man on the other. How true and cosmopolitan is the very first conception of God in the Qur-án! So is the conception of Islam.

The next two words, viz., *al-Rahman* and *al-Rahim*, that constitute the second line, call for special notice. They are "attributive" names of God, meaning the "Beneficent," the "Merciful," respectively. Though seemingly similar in the general sense they convey, they are not identical in significance. No doubt both words are derived from a common root *Rahmat* meaning "mercy," "compassion," "beneficence." The word "Rahm" is also cognate with the word "Riham," meaning "womb," the womb of a mother who covers her children in her womb and after. So does the mercy of the Creator cover His creation—His children. Of course, "mercy" is one and the same, so is its fountain; but the current flows in *two* different directions, and carries with it two different effects. The difference is evident, and not "shadowy," as Rodwell* thinks. Sale, too, has failed to appreciate the difference. He has taken both the words to mean merely "the most merciful God."

"Rahmat" (mercy) is, in Islamic theology, of two kinds: (1) *Rahmat-i-Ámmah* and (2) *Rahmat-i-Támmah*

*Page 19, Note 2, *English Translation of Quran*, "Everyman's Library" Series.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

The first is universal, common to all creation, to all mankind, irrespective of their religious beliefs and irrespective of their conduct—whether deserving of mercy or not, God is the voluntary Bestower of gifts, such as the gifts in Nature and in our own Creation. He has provided them before man earned them, nay, before man came into being. Thus the “mercy” that is indicated in *al-Rahman* is unconditional, all-enduring, all-pervading (Qur-án, VII : 156 ; XL : 7, etc.) and, on account of its being, in His very nature, *compulsory* (Qur-án, VI : 12—54). The second is a *special* benevolence of God, that is extended to those who believe in Him, who follow His ordinances and to whom they look for guidance and help. He, as *ir-Rahim*, moves occasionally to exercise His attribute of grace whenever it is called for. Accordingly, His “grace” is restricted, conditional and discretional and extended only to the elect, to the deserving, to those who have earned it. Briefly, the attribute of “ir-Rahim” may be said to stand in the relation of: (1) Master to a servant, (2) Father to a son, (3) Friend to a friend and (4) Beloved to the lover. Whenever mercy is called for, it is there in some form or other ; it reciprocates as the circumstances demand. The restricted aspect of this “mercy” may perhaps correspond to the “grace” that is so often referred to by St. Paul, or to “the Prasada” of the Vedanta, both of which give the general reader an idea of a temporary or transient nature.

A volume may be written on the distinctive characteristics of each of these attributes. Notwithstanding a profound knowledge of Arabic which they profess to possess, there is not a single Orientalist writer who has devoted his mind to ascertain or to comprehend the correct significance of the two terms, nor to find an equivalent for them in the English

ISLAMIC REVIEW

language. It is Maulana Muhammed Ali and Marmaduke Pickthall who rendered the words into the "Beneficent," the "Merciful," respectively, a rendering that is generally received as a close approach to their real import.

The next is the purpose in the use of *both* the words in the Prayer, and that also immediately after the name of "Rabb," and it is this: He who remembers God by His general and all-comprehensive nature of His Lordship seeks at once His "mercy," because it is in human nature to invoke the quality of "mercy" more than any other Divine quality. The Divine mercy is the essence of all the remaining gifts to man; it does the work of, and is the key to, obtaining all the other gifts from God. "Love is more a part of His nature than the other attributes, in fact the root from which they spring."* By God's "love," we understand only His beneficence and mercy, as is implied in the respective words of *al-Rahman* and *al-Rahim*. In invoking the intervention of the merciful aspect of God in general, His universal, unconditional and unbounded mercy that is inherent in His very nature as *al-Rahman* is *first* remembered, and then an appeal is made to Him to bring into operation His special benevolence as *al-Rahim*. What a marvellous wisdom in the choice and order of the words in the Prayer!

The third verse consists of a compound word, *Málíkî-Yaumiddîn*. *Málík* means "owner," "master," "ruler," "king," while the second word means, "The Day of Judgment," the "Day of Requit." Note that God is spoken of here as the "*Master* of the Day of Requit," and not as *the Judge* of the day. The difference is marked; there is a world of difference

*P. 211, *Notes on the Bible*, Rev. W. Hooper.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

between the two words. The relation between a master and servant is absolutely different from that of a judge and the judged. A mere judge on earth may be unable to show mercy ; he is a mere administrator of justice and not a governing authority. " Neither the life nor the property of those to whom he dispenses justice belongs to him." The owner is different. He cannot, therefore, exercise the prerogative of mercy. It is a privilege which is reserved to the king or to his representative. God, as the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer, is the absolute owner of creation, and *with* Him and *in* Him, the creation has its being, and *to* Him the created eventually return. God is, therefore, more than a judge : He is the King, the King of kings. So, while speaking of the Day of Judgment, He calls Himself " King," " Master," and so on, and not a judge, indicating thereby that it is quite open to Him to deal with His servants in a manner that befits His Lordship, His Kingship, His Mercy. When a person praying acknowledges from the innermost of his heart that God is his absolute Master, it is tantamount to his complete surrender of all his affairs to His Will, and absolute dependence on His mercy. For the Master, therefore, to show mercy to His erring and needy servants is " not synonymous with being unjust." The allegation that God cannot be *just and merciful* at one and the same time is therefore untenable, and the misgiving, if any, is obviated by the use of the word *Málik* in connection with the Day of Judgment. The mention of the Divine attributes of Lordship, Mercy and Mastership, one after another and in logical sequences, indicates that God's justice is tempered with His mercy, an ideal qualification for a judge.

We have already pointed out that the part which a worshipper actually plays in the Prayer begins with the fourth verse, and here the plural *we* is used. It

ISLAMIC REVIEW

indicates that a person praying does not pray solely for himself, lest it may be selfish. On the other hand he embraces in his fold of Prayer all others who pray to and seek God. What a practical proof it is of a Muslim seeking and strengthening the *brotherhood* of men !

The Prayer is consummated by a prayer at the end for the "right path" (*Sirát al-Mustaqim*)—to walk with the righteous that the highest position of spiritual eminence be reached, and the highest ambition of man be fulfilled. It is the natural ambition of man. The whole of humanity moves only in search of the "Right Path," the path of "Rectitude" which goes, however, by different technical names in different scriptures, e.g., *Asha* in Zend-Avesta, *Dharma* in Sanskrit, the *Noble Eightfold Path* of the Buddha and *Sirát al-Mustaqim* (Verse 5) of the Qur-án. The linguistic difference in the names given to the "right path" is immaterial, because the origin of all these names coveys one and the same meaning, "straight path," the "right path." All the ideas tend towards the path of virtue, and each one of them may be good in its own way. Though the ideal of virtue may be common to all religions, *different* is its outlook with different Teachers. Some are very ancient and antiquated, impractical and unsuited to modern times ; some others are highly philosophical, obscure and unintelligible to the people at large ; a few, conservative and exclusive, and a few others, devoid of any ambition beyond the grave. Therefore, though the principle of Rectitude may have been the basic principle governing all religions, the law of Rectitude as laid down by different Teachers has not been uniform. It cannot be. It would vary with the conditions prevailing from time to time ; it varies with the cultures of the people developing by leaps and bounds ; and, above all, it varies with the intuitive faculties of the human minds

CORRESPONDENCE

that evolve them. We have, therefore, to search for and seek a path—the latest, the most modern, the most universal, best adapted to people of all cultures and of all times, and yet simple and practical. It is this path that is prayed for in the fifth verse of the chapter under discussion, and it is the law of this path that is codified in the Qur-án, to be adopted, not by Muslims alone, but by all who seek God.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

ORPINGTON, KENT.
11th February, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I have spent many hours in reading the copy of the Holy Qur-án that you sent me. At times I was afraid of what I read, but of late, not so much. When I saw that the Holy Qur-án had been revealed to the Holy Prophet by God, I felt I had a really authentic book in which to believe.

It is because of this that I write to ask you if I could declare my faith in Islam and become a Muslim. Not now, perhaps, but in the near future. Please write and let me know if this is possible. Although I am young (only 17 years old), I have, I think, a soul which has been awakened to the Truth at last.

When you reply, will you also include a copy of "Islam and the Muslim Prayer" for which I enclose 1/6 ?

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
(Mr.) J. W.

THE SECRETARY,
THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING, SURREY.

BRIGHOUSE, YORKS.
14th February, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I have recently read a book by Mr. Lovegrove on "What is Islam ?" that has interested me very much, and I should like to read further along these lines. Has this gentleman written anything more along similar lines, or showing more in detail, the basis of the Muslim Faith ? If he has not, perhaps you could tell me of some good works on this subject and where they are to be obtained. If Mr. Lovegrove is living and in this country, or America, I should like to correspond with him, provided, of course, that he has no objection, and would like to answer some queries of mine.

I shall hope to hear from you soon.

Yours truly,
C. L. I.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

CAMBERLEY, SURREY.

2nd March, 1940.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

When passing through Woking recently by train I noticed the advertisement "What is Islam?" and I am thus writing for further information as to what is Islam. I would like to know.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully,
R. M. L.

ORPINGTON, KENT.

16th February, 1940.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I was very happy to receive your letter to-day and am very pleased to return your form duly completed. I shall indeed do my best to fit myself for the entry into "The Garden."

I have not (as you will observe) contacted any Muslim Society, but I know there is one in 18 Eccleston Square, London, of the above name, where Friday prayers are held. As I live some way from the Shah Jehan Mosque, I propose attending the latter Society when I cannot reach the Mosque.

Once again I thank you for your encouragement along a difficult road and remain,

Yours faithfully,
(Mr.) J. WAGON.

PRESTON.

22nd March, 1940.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR IMAM SAHIB,

I am writing to ask you if you would help me to become a Muslim. I am an English Christian but I never attend the Church. I abstained from eating pork over a year ago when I heard that it was forbidden to Muslims; neither do I drink. Before I can become a Muslim, do I need to be blessed, and, if so, where shall I have to go?

I hope you will let me know what to do and everything about your religion.

Yours faithfully,
DORIS CATTERALL.

CORRESPONDENCE

CAMBRIDGE PARK,
WANSTEAD, E. II.
28th March, 1940.

To
THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR IMAM,

Peace be upon you and the Blessing of Allah ! I am an English Muslim and am in the Royal Air Force. The 2/- a day that I am allowed does not allow me to save anything and I would like an English-Arabic Koran that I may sit and learn with. Is there any one of my brothers that you know who could give me one ? I am just learning Arabic but can't speak or understand anything in that language yet, so the Koran would have to be in English. I hope you will be able to send me one.

Yours in Islam,
L. HONE.

To THE SECRETARY,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DERBY.
31st March, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I am unaware to whom I should address this personally but I trust that it will nevertheless reach the right person.

I am desirous of obtaining information as to the steps to be taken, by a person, namely myself, wishing to embrace the Faith of Islam.

I am at present serving in the British Army.

I have, for some time past, been frankly worried about the relation of the Christian religion with my views about God and all that is Right (for want of a better word). It seems to me that if the Christian Churches practise what they preach, they can in no way support war, which they are doing. Week after week I have heard sermons on "Thou shalt not kill" and "Turning the other cheek," yet, now one finds even the Leaders of the Church openly supporting the war, instead of doing something to stop it.

Ever since my school-days when I was chosen to support Islam at the School Philosophical Society, I have had the life and teachings of Muhammad at the back of my mind. In this past week or so I have again turned to as many books on the subject as I can get hold of.

I have the basic principles of the Faith as far as can be obtained from semi-critical writings, and as far as I can see at present it solves my worries.

I would, however, be very grateful to you for information on the following of Islam in this country and, as I have said, steps to take on embracing the Faith.

On re-reading the foregoing it reads like an application for a sample of patent soap but, believe me, I have given this matter much thought and am very serious indeed.

Yours very sincerely,
W. R. EASTGATE.

P.S.—Until now I have been a Methodist and was married in a Methodist Church. My wife does not associate herself with my present views.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

To
THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

PRESTON, LANCS.
6th April, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

Thank you for your kind interest in regard to my asking about the Muslim religion. I should have replied sooner, only I wished to read the book you sent me carefully first. I am enclosing the Declaration Form which I have filled in. I would be very grateful to read any more literature you would be kind enough to send me, and please let me know if I have to return the book "What is Islam?" now I have read it.

Thanking you once again.

Yours faithfully,
D. CATTERALL.

To
THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DERBY.
10th April, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of the 3rd instant and have pleasure in returning the Declaration Form duly filled in. The literature you so kindly sent me has been most helpful and has left no doubt in my mind that the principles of Islam conform to my personal beliefs. I am deeply honoured to be a member of your fraternity and will endeavour to live up to your ideals.

As I informed you I am at present in the Royal Engineers but hope soon to be going to an Officers' Training Centre for the Infantry. I will inform you of any change of my address.

I have not at present a photograph of myself with me but will let you have one as soon as possible.

With best wishes.

Yours fraternally,
H. R. EASTGATE.

To
THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

WHITCHURCH, HANTS.
15th April, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I shall esteem it a favour if you will kindly forward me literature on Islam.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,
W. ATKINS.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

THE RECTORY,
MARSTON PARK,
NR. FROME, SOM.
18th April, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

Would you kindly send particulars of the Muslim Society as I am very interested in the Muslim Religion and would like to know more about it.

Yours in the cause of humanity,
IVOR WILLIAMS.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission, as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: Belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God-- the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of

ISLAMIC REVIEW

All the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead-letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

ZAKAT

THE two injunctions that are most frequent in the Quran are about Prayer and Zakat. "Keep up prayer and pay the poor rate" repeats the Holy Book time out of number to keep the existence of the Muslim Community from annihilation. It is clear that whereas the Prayer looks after the spiritual health of the community, the Zakat ministers to the material needs of it. Islam never denies the claims of matter in the pursuit of spiritual ideals of humanity.

Like Prayer, Zakat is an organised institution in Islam. Prayer can be said anywhere and alone, and yet we are enjoined to pray in congregation in the mosques. The far reaching effects of this wise regulation have been perceived and acknowledged even by our enemies. That inspite of so many shocks in its political history, the heart of Islamic social life still beats strong, is largely due to these congregational prayers.

Similarly, charity in Islam was intended to be disbursed on an organised scale. Private charities have their own benefits just as private prayers have theirs. But the official charity which Zakat takes cognisance of is to be collected in a central fund and disbursed in the light of the pressing needs of the community at a given time. These needs are of two kinds at any time—internal and external, that is, if half of it should be spent in supporting the social life as it exists, the other half should be devoted to the repulsing of any attacks on that life—political, moral and cultural, and to the extending of its frontiers. The Holy Quran is quite explicit on this :

"Alms are only for the needy, the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are

made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives, and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the way-farer; an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is knowing, wise. " *Al-Baqara* — Ch. 9, V. 60.

Unfortunately, Muslims have, of late, very much neglected this great institution of Islam. If some are altogether loose in its observance, there are others who do not, for want of proper knowledge, keep the spirit of the institution. Among these latter there are many who are God-fearing and are anxious to obey the command of Allah in this matter. We earnestly appeal to this class in particular to think twice before they give away Zakat money. We are sorry to remark that generally speaking the money so given in charity goes to wrong quarters. And even if in some cases it goes to deserving persons, we must not forget that national needs are far above any private needs. No one will deny that the Muslim community at the moment is in the midst of a life and death struggle. Individuals can be said to be living only when the nation is a living one. An individual in a moribund nation has no value in the eye of the world. So the nation must be looked after first and then the individuals.

We all know that for lack of religious vitality, Muslims, who have hitherto been successfully resisting the onslaughts of enemies on its social and cultural existence, have, of late, been showing signs of exhaustion in these fields. The first duty of a Muslim patriot to-day, therefore, is to see that this drooping religious vitality is revived in the Muslims. And no one will deny that the most effective work in this connection has been done by "The Woking Muslim Mission".

By a surprising change in the Muslim policy from the defensive to the offensive, the promoters of the Woking Movement, brought a sudden and a new inspiration to the religious outlook of the Muslim Community. It is a real *Jihad*, which this Mission has been carrying on for the last 27 years,—the only proper *Jihad* of the time. Islam was attacked intellectually and through organised missionary efforts. The reply

should be on similar lines to be a fitting one. No careful student of modern history can miss the gradual development of self-confidence in the Muslim religious mind within recent years and this we make bold to say is the effect of the achievements of the Woking Muslim Mission. In fact if Islam, at any time needed a strenuous effort to save it from a collapse, the time is now and the task has been undertaken by the Woking Muslim Mission.

It is remarkable that having pursued its objective for the last 27 years in the West, the breeding field of anti-Islamic propaganda, the Mission has now turned its attention to the field at home. The decision which the Mission has now taken with regard to the **Propagation of Islam in India** should awaken such of our Indian co-religionists as have remained unmoved by its foreign activities. Patriotism coupled with religious zeal should inspire every Indian Muslim to come to the support of the Mission in its new undertaking.

Not to depend on other sources, if the sensible section of Indian Muslims can see the advisability of sending half of their annual Zakat money, if not the whole, to the funds of this Mission, it will provide the institution with an economic fortification, which will more than make up for the non-participation of the indifferent.

Rajab, the month of Zakat charity corresponds with the month of August this year. No effort to divert the Zakat money along this most useful channel can be regarded as too great.

KHAWAJA ABDUL GHANI,

Secretary,

**The Woking Muslim Mission & Literary Trust,
LAHORE.**

All remittances in this connection should be made payable to the Financial Secretary, the Woking Muslim Mission, Azeez Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore, (Pb. India).

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